

CAPSULE SUMMARY

BA-1051

414 East Pennsylvania Avenue

East Towson, Baltimore County

Circa 1880

Private

The Gothic Revival-style dwelling, constructed circa 1880, is located at 414 East Pennsylvania Avenue in East Towson. The history of East Towson dates from the purchase of one-and-a-quarter acres of land by Daniel Harris in September 1853. This is believed to be the first documented African-American landholding in Towson, and is among the oldest such ethnic enclave in Baltimore County. Further, manumitted slaves and/or descendents of former slaves, many of who were owned by Charles Ridgely, populated the neighborhood. Hampered by the low economic status of the residents, development in the 19th century was slow, increasing after the turn of the 20th century. The setting of the property, building styles, and construction materials were guided by the limited economic status of the residents and their desire to establish a neighborhood of their own without the assistance of white architects, builders, and craftsmen. By 1927, the community was ninety-five percent improved with single-family dwellings, social buildings, a school, and religious structures.

This single-family vernacular I-house rises two-stories in height and is three bays wide with a central entrance, and one interior-end capped brick chimney. Its wood frame construction is re-clad with asbestos shingles, and is capped with a side gable roof sheathed with asphalt shingles. The one-story shed-roof porch covers the three bays on the façade and is supported with both turned and chamfered posts. The house is lighted with 6/6 double-hung vinyl sash windows and a one-light transom above the door. The windows have square-edged wood surrounds and wood shutters. The foundation is not visible. The house is sited on a level grassy lot with a chain link fence lining the perimeter of the property.

7. Description

Inventory No. BA- 1051

Condition

<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> altered

Prepare both a one paragraph summary and a comprehensive description of the resource and its various elements as it exists today.

Constructed between 1880 and 1895, this single-family vernacular I-house is located at 414 East Pennsylvania Avenue in the East Towson neighborhood. It rises two-stories in height and is three bays wide with a central entrance, and one interior-end capped brick chimney. Its wood frame construction is re-clad with asbestos shingles, and is capped with a side gable roof sheathed with asphalt shingles. The one-story shed-roof porch covers the three bays on the façade and is supported with both turned and chamfered posts. The house is lighted with 6/6 double-hung vinyl sash windows and a one-light transom above the door. The windows have square-edged wood surrounds and wood shutters. The foundation is not visible. The house is sited on a level grassy lot with a chain link fence lining the perimeter of the property.

8. Significance

Inventory No. BA- 1051

Period	Areas of Significance	Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> health/medicine	<input type="checkbox"/> performing arts	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> invention	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-1999	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment/ recreation	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion	
<input type="checkbox"/> 2000-	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> ethnic heritage	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science	
	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/ settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> social history	
	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning		<input type="checkbox"/> maritime history	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation	
	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation		<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:	

Specific dates 1880-1895

Architect/Builder Unknown

Construction dates 1885-1895

Evaluation for:

☐ National Register☐ Maryland Register☒ not evaluated

Prepare a one-paragraph summary statement of significance addressing applicable criteria, followed by a narrative discussion of the history of the resource and its context. (For compliance projects, complete evaluation on a DOE Form – see manual.)

The house at 414 East Pennsylvania Avenue was constructed between 1880 and 1895 in the East Towson neighborhood of Baltimore County. East Towson is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history, specifically the pre-Civil War development of an African-American neighborhood in a predominately white community. The history of this property dates from the purchase of one-and-a-quarter acres of land by Daniel Harris in September 1853. This is believed to be the first documented African-American landholding in Towson, and is among the oldest such ethnic enclave in Baltimore County. Further, manumitted slaves and/or descendents of former slaves, many of who were owned by Charles Ridgely, populated the neighborhood. Hampered by the low economic status of the residents, development in the 19th century was slow, increasing after the turn of the 20th century. The setting of the property, building styles, and construction materials were guided by the limited economic status of the residents and their desire to establish a neighborhood of their own without the assistance of white architects, builders, and craftsmen. By 1927, the community was ninety-five percent improved with single-family dwellings, social buildings, a school, and religious structures. Many of the current homeowners and tenants living in the neighborhood are descendents of the first African-American residents.

East Towson as a whole is representative of an important phase of architectural development in Baltimore County, illustrating the dilution of popular architectural styles to more efficiently meet the needs of the neighborhood, and the builders' untrained abilities to execute the fashionable ornamentation. Thus, East Towson provided lower cost housing in a more suburban neighborhood, rather than the urban setting their economic status typically perpetuated.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Inventory No. BA- 1051

- Atlas of Baltimore County, Maryland*. Philadelphia, PA: G. M. Hopkins, 1877.
Baltimore County Historic Inventory.
Brooks, Neal A. and Eric G. Rockel. *A History of Baltimore County*. Towson, MD: Friends of the Towson Library, Inc., 1979.
Map of Baltimore County. Philadelphia, PA: G. W. Bromley, 1915.
Scharf, J. Thomas. *History of Baltimore City and County From the Earliest Period to the Present Day: Including Biographical Sketches of Their Representative Men*. Philadelphia, PA: Louis H. Everts, 1881. Reprinted by Higginson Book Company, Salem, MA.
Sidney, J. C. *Map of the City and County of Baltimore, Maryland, from Original Surveys*. Baltimore, MD: James M. Stephens, 1850.

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of surveyed property .13 Acre
Acreage of historical setting Unknown
Quadrangle name Towson

Quadrangle scale: 1:24,000

Verbal boundary description and justification

The dwelling is located at 414 East Pennsylvania Avenue in East Towson in the Ninth District of Baltimore County. It has historically been associated with Tax Map 70, Parcel 60 since its construction between 1880-1895

11. Form Prepared by

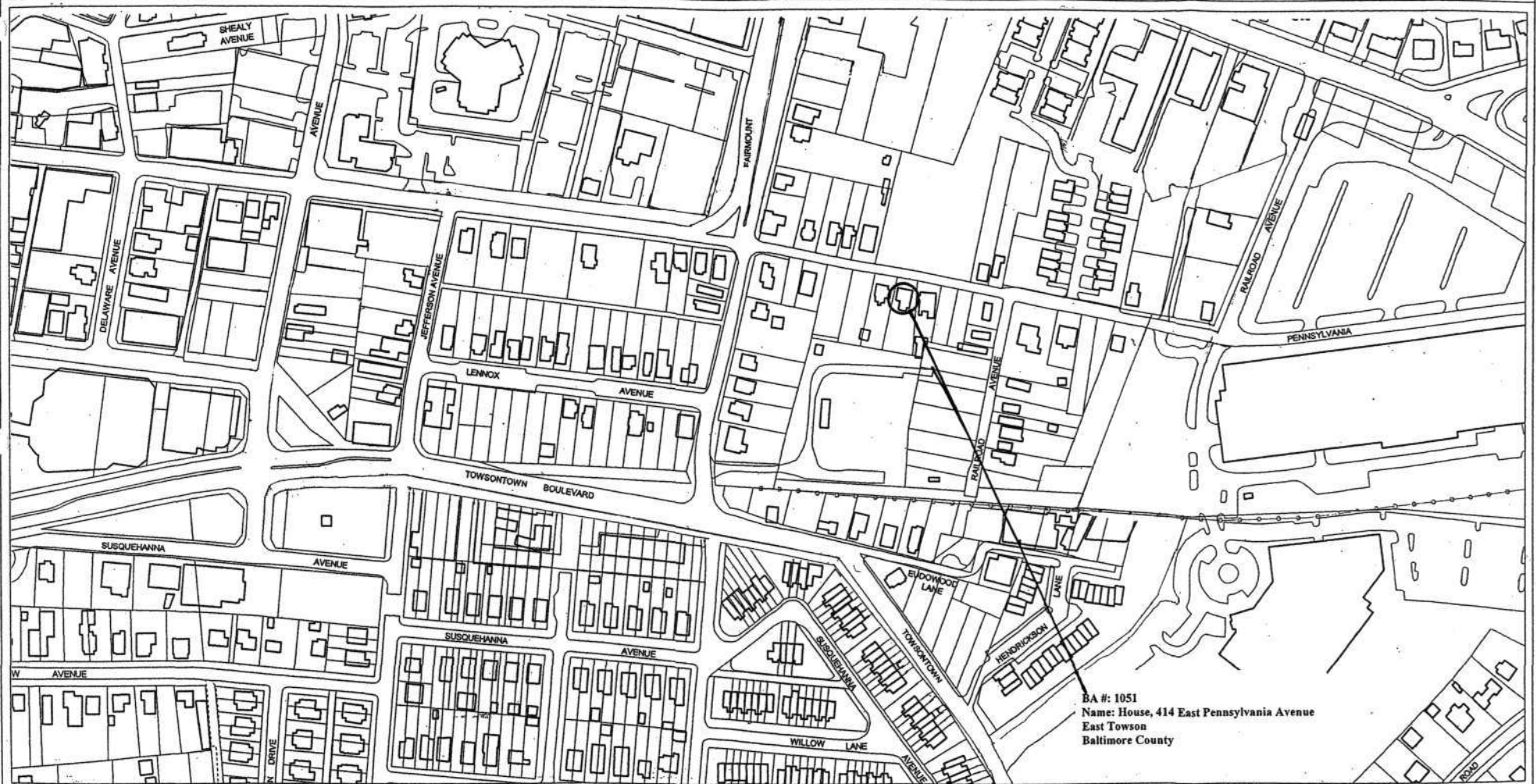
name/title	K. Baynard, R. Weidlich, J. Bunting, Architectural Historians		
organization	EHT Traceries, Incorporated	date	November 30, 2001
street & number	1121 5th Street NW	telephone	202.393.1199
city or town	Washington	state	DC

The Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 supplement.

The survey and inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

return to: Maryland Historical Trust
DHCD/DHCP
100 Community Place
Crownsville, MD 21032-2023
410-514-7600

East Towson: Planimetric Data



Prepared by:
Baltimore County Office of Planning
401 Bosley Avenue
Towson, Maryland 21204
June, 2001



Scale
1 inch = 200 feet
1:2400
100 0 100 200 Feet

Legend

Paved Roads	Study Area Boundary	Hydrographic Features
Unpaved Roads	Buildings	Vegetation
Paved Parking / Driveways		

Data Sources:
Planimetric Data: Baltimore County OIT GIS Services Unit (1:2400)
Parcel Boundaries: Baltimore County OIT GIS Services Unit (1:2400)
Study Area: Baltimore County Office of Planning (1:2400)
Coordinate System:
Maryland State Plane: NAD83/91 Horizontal Datum
Elevations in Feet: NAVD88 Vertical Datum
Date of Data Capture: March 1996
Scale of Data Capture: 1" = 100'

BA-1051
East Towson
Towson, Maryland
Towson USGS Quad Map
Baltimore County



(BALTIMORE WEST)
5562' SW

Mapped by the Army Map Service
Edited and published by the Geological Survey
Control by USGS, USC&GS, USCE, and Maryland
Bureau of Control Surveys and Maps

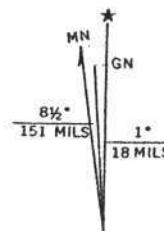
Culture and drainage in part compiled from aerial photographs
taken 1943. Topography by planetable surveys 1944
Culture revised by the Geological Survey 1957

Polyconic projection. 1927 North American datum
10,000-foot grid based on Maryland coordinate system
1000-metre Universal Transverse Mercator grid ticks,
zone 18, shown in blue

Red tint indicates areas in which only
landmark buildings are shown

Revisions shown in purple compiled by the Geological Survey from
aerial photographs taken 1966 and 1974. This information not
field checked

Purple tint indicates extension of urban areas



UTM GRID AND 1974 MAGNETIC NORTH
DECLINATION AT CENTER OF SHEET



BA-1051

HOUSE, 414 EAST PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE

BALTIMORE COUNTY, MD

TRACERIES

10/2001

MD-SHPD

NORTH ELEVATION

1 of 3



BA-1051

HOUSE, 414 EAST PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE

BALTIMORE COUNTY, MD

TRAILERIES

10/2001

MD-SHPD

NE CORNER

2 of 3



NO
PARKING
7-9AM
3-5PM
MON-FRI
↔

BA-1051

HOUSE, 414 EAST PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE
BALTIMORE COUNTY, MD

TRAILERIES

10/1001

MD-SHPO

NW CORNER

3 of 3

INVENTORY FORM FOR STATE HISTORIC SITES SURVEY

1 NAME

HISTORIC THE JOHN CURTISS HOUSE

AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER 414 Pennsylvania Ave.

second

CITY, TOWN Towson Md.

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

VICINITY OF Baltimore

STATE

COUNTY

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE <input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL <input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	ACCESSIBLE	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT <input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME John Curtiss

Telephone #: 823;3454

STREET & NUMBER 414 Pennsylvania Ave.

CITY, TOWN Towson Md. 21204

VICINITY OF

STATE, zip code

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Baltimore County Courthouse

Liber #:

Folio #: 841:466

STREET & NUMBER 401 Bosley Ave.

CITY, TOWN Towson Md. 21204

STATE

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

BA-1051 - 414 Pennsylvania

before 1915

This two-story frame house has the same center-stair plan as its neighbors, 412 (BA-1050) and 416 (BA-1052) Penna. The building is three bays wide by one bay deep, followed by a rear addition. A por-
featuring chamfered posts crosses the front of the house.

7 DESCRIPTION**CONDITION**

☒ EXCELLENT
☐ GOOD
☐ FAIR

☐ DETERIORATED
☐ RUINS
☐ UNEXPOSED

CHECK ONE

☒ UNALTERED
☐ ALTERED

CHECK ONE

☐ ORIGINAL SITE
☐ MOVED DATE _____

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

414 Pa.

414 Pennsylvania is similar to its neighbors, 412 & 416 Pa. It was built in the early twentieth century and is two stories high, three bays wide, and one bay deep. A small two-story addition runs to the south from the rear wall. The roof of the main block runs east-west, parallel to the street. The front porch's shed roof is supported by chamfered posts. Three 6/6 windows on the second floor and two 6/6 windows flanking a central door on the first floor light the facade. The windows are furnished with louvered shutters. The gable ends are infenestrated. An interior stove flue rises in the west gable end. The house is covered with grey asbestos shingles.

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

8 SIGNIFICANCE**PERIOD**

☐ PREHISTORIC
☐ 1400-1499
☐ 1500-1599
☐ 1600-1699
☐ 1700-1799
☐ 1800-1899
☐ 1900-

☐ ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC
☐ ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC
☐ AGRICULTURE
☐ ARCHITECTURE
☐ ART
☐ COMMERCE
☐ COMMUNICATIONS

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW

☐ COMMUNITY PLANNING
☐ CONSERVATION
☐ ECONOMICS
☐ EDUCATION
☐ ENGINEERING
☐ EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT
☐ INDUSTRY
☐ INVENTION

☐ LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE
☐ LAW
☐ LITERATURE
☐ MILITARY
☐ MUSIC
☐ PHILOSOPHY
☐ POLITICS/GOVERNMENT

☐ RELIGION
☐ SCIENCE
☐ SCULPTURE
☐ SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
☐ THEATER
☐ TRANSPORTATION
☐ OTHER (SPECIFY)

SPECIFIC DATES

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Towson Real Estate Company owned this property around 1906. It was later purchased by Noah E. Offutt who later conveyed the property to Annie Young in 1914. Annie Young retained the property until W. Gill Smith sold the property to John W. Curtiss in 1930. John Curtiss has retained the property to this present day.

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY _____

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE

COUNTY

STATE

COUNTY

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Marcus Pollock/coordinator Merry Stinson/architect

7/77

ORGANIZATION

Committee to Save E. Towson/Towson Ymca

DATE

823-8870

STREET & NUMBER

600 W. Chesapeake Ave.

TELEPHONE

CITY OR TOWN

Towson Md. 21204

STATE

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RETURN TO: Maryland Historical Trust
The Shaw House, 21 State Circle
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
(301) 267-1438



BA-1051
John Curtiss House
414 Pa. Ave.
Towson, Md.
north

Merry Stinson
1977